

stepped backwards from the doorstep to the pavement, conveyed himself in the same crab-like fashion to the centre of the quadrangle of ancient buildings constituting the Inn, and so stood, staring up at the window with the yellow-green flare behind the dusty brown wire-blinds, and tapping his latchkey on his chin as he had tapped it on the door-knob. Then he rejoined the other to say, with rather a perturbed and dubious air:

"If your business could wait half-an-hour or so, and you—being a stranger, as I take it?—and new to the sights of London—were to indulge in a little walk along Holborn—say as far as Bloomsbury Street—and drop in at the British Museum, and have a look at the Elgin Marbles or the Assyrian Bulls,—or the—the Mummies in the Egyptian Department,—and then come back again,—you might stand a better chance of getting the bell answered." The speaker added, meeting a look of decided obstinacy, quite in keeping with the pouting, deeply-cut lips and the square chin with a cleft in it: "Unless you can suggest a better idea, you know. . . ."

"My idea is to stop here and ring until the bell is answered. But I am obliged to you all the same!" said the young man.

"You've waited long enough, you think?" hesitated Messrs. Wotherspoon and Cadderby's head-clerk.

The answer came with a flash of strong white teeth in the fresh-coloured countenance that was dusted with dark brown freckles.

"Just twenty-three years," said the shaggy-haired young man.

"Lord bless me!" said Mr. Chown, "you must have begun waiting in your cradle! But time flies and business presses, and——"

"My view exactly!" returned the freckled young man, as the head-clerk inserted his latchkey into the heavy door